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A War Message to the Farmer



By
PRESIDENT WILSON

*Sent to a Farmers' Conference at
Urbana, Ill., January 31, 1918*

18-26446

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" COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of War
The Secretary of the Navy
George Creel

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A War Message to the Farmer

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I AM very sorry indeed that I cannot be present in person at the Urbana conference. I should like to enjoy the benefit of the inspiration and exchange of counsel which I know I should obtain; but in the circumstances it has seemed impossible for me to be present, and therefore I can only send you a very earnest message expressing my interest and the thoughts which such a conference must bring prominently into every mind.

THE OBJECT OF THE WAR

I need not tell you, for I am sure you realize as keenly as I do, that we are, as a nation, in the presence of a great task which demands supreme sacrifice and endeavor of every one of us. We can give everything that is needed with the greater willingness, and even satisfaction, because the object of the war in which we are engaged is the greatest that free men have ever undertaken.

It is to prevent the life of the world from being determined and the fortunes of men everywhere affected by small groups of military masters who seek their own interest and the selfish dominion throughout the world of the Governments they unhappily for the moment control.

You will not need to be convinced that it was necessary for us as a free people to take part in this war. It had raised its evil hand against us.

The rulers of Germany had sought to exercise their power in such a way as to shut off our economic life so far as our intercourse with Europe was concerned, and to confine our people within the western hemisphere while they accomplished purposes which would have permanently impaired and impeded every process of our national life and have put the fortunes of Amer-

ica at the mercy of the Imperial Government of Germany. This was no threat. It had become a reality.

FIGHTING FOR OUR LIBERTY

Their hand of violence had been laid upon our own people and our own property, in flagrant violation not only of justice but of the well-recognized and long-standing covenants of international law and treaty.

We are fighting, therefore, as truly for the liberty and self-government of the United States as if the war of our own Revolution had to be fought over again; and every man in every business in the United States must know by this time that his whole future fortune lies in the balance.

Our national life and our whole economic development will pass under the sinister influence of foreign control if we do not win. We must win, therefore, and we shall win. I need not ask you to pledge your lives and fortunes with those of the rest of the nation to the accomplishment of that great end.

You will realize, as I think statesmen on both sides of the water realize, that the culminating crisis of the struggle has come and that the achievements of this year on the one side or the other must determine the issue.

OUR ASSOCIATES DEPEND UPON US FOR SUPPLIES

It has turned out that the forces that fight for freedom, the freedom of men all over the world as well as our own, depend upon us in an extraordinary and unexpected degree for sustenance, for the supply of the materials by which men are to live and to fight; and it will be our glory when the war is over that we have supplied those materials and supplied them abundantly, and it will be all the more glory because in supplying them we have made our supreme effort and sacrifice.

THE GOVERNMENT IS HELPING THE FARMER

In the field of agriculture we have agencies and instrumentalities, fortunately, such as no other Government in the world can show. The Department of Agriculture is undoubtedly the greatest practical and scientific agricultural organization in the world.

Its total annual budget of \$46,000,000 has been increased during the last four years more than 72 per cent. It has a staff of 18,000, including a large number of highly trained experts, and alongside of it stand the unique land-grant colleges, which are without example elsewhere, and the 69 State and Federal experiment stations.

These colleges and experiment stations have a total endowment of plant and equipment of \$172,000,000 and an income of more than \$35,000,000; with 10,271 teachers, a resident student body of 125,000, and a vast additional number receiving instruction at their homes. County agents, joint officers of the Department of Agriculture and of the colleges, are everywhere co-operating with the farmers and assisting them.

The number of extension workers under the Smith-Lever act and under the recent emergency legislation has grown to 5,500 men and women, working regularly in the various communities and taking to the farmer the latest scientific and practical information.

Alongside these great public agencies stand the very effective voluntary organizations among the farmers themselves, which are more and more learning the best methods of co-operation and the best methods of putting to practical use the assistance derived from governmental sources.

The banking legislation of the last two or three years has given the farmers access to the great lendable capital of the country, and it has become the duty both of the men in charge of the Federal reserve banking system and of the farm loan banking system to see

to it that the farmers obtain the credit, both short term and long term, to which they are not only entitled, but which it is imperatively necessary should be extended to them if the present tasks of the country are to be adequately performed. Both by direct purchase of nitrates and by the establishment of plants to produce nitrates, the Government is doing its utmost to assist in the problem of fertilization.

The Department of Agriculture and other agencies are actively assisting the farmers to locate, safeguard and secure at cost an adequate supply of sound seed. The department has \$2,500,000 available for this purpose now, and has asked Congress for \$6,000,000 more.

THE LABOR PROBLEM

The labor problem is one of great difficulty, and some of the best agencies of the nation are addressing themselves to the task of solving it, so far as it is possible to solve it. Farmers have not been exempted from the draft. I know that they would not wish to be. I take it for granted they would not wish to be put in a class by themselves in this respect.

But the attention of the War Department has been very seriously centered upon the task of interfering with the labor of the farms as little as possible, and under the new draft regulations I believe that the farmers of the country will find that their supply of labor is very much less seriously drawn upon than it was under the first and initial draft, made before we had had our present full experience in these perplexing matters.

The supply of labor in all industries is a matter we must look to and are looking to with diligent care.

And let me say that the stimulation of the agencies I have enumerated has been responded to by the farmers in splendid fashion. I dare say that you are aware that the farmers of this country are as efficient as any other farmers in the world.

They do not produce more per acre than the farmers in Europe. It is not necessary that they should do so. It would perhaps be bad economy for them to attempt it. But they do produce by two or three or four times more per man, per unit of labor and capital, than the farmers of any European country. They are more alert and use more labor-saving devices than any other farmers in the world.

FARMERS HAVE MET WAR DEMANDS

And their response to the demands of the present emergency has been in every way remarkable. Last spring their planting exceeded by 12,000,000 acres the largest planting of any previous year, and the yields from the crops were record-breaking yields.

In the fall of 1917 a wheat acreage of 42,170,000 was planted, which was 1,000,000 larger than for any preceding year, 3,000,000 greater than the next largest, and 7,000,000 greater than the preceding five-year average.

But I ought to say to you that it is not only necessary that these achievements should be repeated, but that they should be exceeded. I know what this advice involves. It involves not only labor but sacrifice, the painstaking application of every bit of scientific knowledge and every tested practice that is available.

It means the utmost economy, even to the point where the pinch comes. It means the kind of concentration and self-sacrifice which is involved in the field of battle itself, where the object always looms greater than the individual. And the Government will help in every way that is possible.

THE BASIS OF PRICE FIXING

The impression which prevails in some quarters that while the Government has sought to fix the prices of foodstuffs, it has not sought to fix other prices which determine the expenses of the farmer, is a mistaken one.

As a matter of fact, the Government has actively and successfully regulated the prices of many fundamental materials underlying all the industries of the country, and has regulated them not only for the purchases of the Government but also for the purchases of the general public; and I have every reason to believe that the Congress will extend the powers of the Government in this important and even essential matter, so that the tendency to profiteering which is showing itself in too many quarters may be effectively checked.

In fixing the prices of foodstuffs the Government has sincerely tried to keep the interests of the farmer as much in mind as the interests of the communities which are to be served, but it is serving mankind as well as the farmer, and everything in these times of war takes on the rigid aspect of duty.

THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THIS GREAT HOUR

I will not appeal to you to continue and renew and increase your efforts. I do not believe that it is necessary to do so. I believe that you will do it without any word or appeal from me; because you understand as well as I do the needs and opportunities of this great hour, when the fortunes of mankind everywhere seem about to be determined, and when America has the greatest opportunity she has ever had to make good her own freedom, and in making it good to lend a helping hand to men struggling for their freedom everywhere.

You remember that it was farmers from whom came the first shots at Lexington, that set aflame the Revolution that made America free. I hope and believe that the farmers of America will willingly and conspicuously stand by to win this war also.

The toil, the intelligence, the energy, the foresight, the self-sacrifice and devotion of the farmers of America, will, I believe, bring to a triumphant conclusion this great last war for the emancipation of men from the control of arbitrary government and the selfishness of class legislation and control; and then, when the end has come, we may look each other in the face and be glad that we are Americans and have had the privilege to play such a part.

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

10 Jackson Place,

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The Prussian System



By

FREDERIC C. WALCOTT

of the United States Food Administration

18-26444 —

U.S. COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Secretary of State

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION
10 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C.

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The Prussian System

*Told by F. C. Walcott at Conference of
Food Administration Agents,
Sept. 12, 1917*

This I have seen. I could not believe it unless I had seen it through and through. For several weeks I lived with it; I went all about it and back of it; inside and out of it was shown to me—until finally I came to realize that the incredible was true. It is monstrous, it is unthinkable, but it exists. It is the Prussian system.

A year ago I went to Poland to learn its facts concerning the remnant of a people that had been decimated by war. The country had been twice devastated. First the Russian army swept through it, and then the Germans. Along the roadside from Warsaw to Pinsk, the present firing line, a distance of 230 miles, near half a million people had died of hunger and cold. The way was strewn with their bones picked clean by the crows. With their usual thrift the Germans were collecting the larger bones to be milled into fertilizer, but finger and toe bones lay on the ground with the mud covered and rain soaked clothing.

Wicker baskets were scattered along the way—the basket in which the baby swings from the rafter in every peasant home. Every mile there were scores of them, each one telling of a death. I started to count, but after a little I had to give it up, there were so many.

That is the desolation one saw along the great road from Warsaw to Pinsk, mile after mile, more than two hundred miles. They told me a million people were made homeless in six weeks of the German drive in August and September, 1916. They told me four hundred thousand died on the way. The rest, scarcely half alive, got through with the Russian army. Many of these have been sent to Siberia; it is these people whom the Paderewski committee is trying to relieve.

In the refugee camps, 300,000 survivors of the flight were gathered by the Germans, members of broken families. They were lodged in jerry-built barracks, scarcely waterproof, unlighted, unwarmed in the dead of winter. Their clothes, where the buttons were lost, were sewed on. There were no conveniences, they had not even been able to wash for weeks. Filth and infection from vermin were spreading. They were famished, their daily ration a cup of soup and a piece of bread as big as my fist.

In Warsaw, which had not been destroyed, a city of one million inhabitants, one of the most prosperous cities of Europe before the war, the streets were lined with people in the pangs of starvation. Famished and rain-soaked, they squatted there, with their elbows on their knees or leaning against the buildings, too feeble to lift a hand for a bit of money or a morsel of bread if one offered it, perishing of hunger and cold. Charity did what it could. The rich gave all that they had, the poor shared their last crust. Hundreds of thousands were perishing. Day and night the picture is before my eyes—a people starving, a nation dying.

In that situation, the German commander issued a proclamation. **Every able-bodied Pole was bidden to Germany to work.** If any refused, let no other Pole give him to eat, not so much as a mouthful, under penalty of German military law.

This is the choice the German Government gives to the conquered Pole, to the husband and father of a starving family: Leave your family to die or survive as the case may be. Leave your country, which is destroyed, to work in Germany for its further destruction. If you are obstinate, we shall see that you surely starve.

Staying with his folk, he is doomed and they are not saved; the father and husband can do nothing for them, he only adds to their risk and suffering. Leaving them, he will be cut off from his family, they may never hear from him again nor he from them. Germany will set him to work that a German workman may be released to fight against his own land and people. He shall be lodged in barracks, behind barbed wire entanglements, under armed guard. He shall sleep on the bare ground with a single thin

blanket. He shall be scantily fed and his earnings shall be taken from him to pay for his food.

That is the choice which the German Government offers to a proud, sensitive, high-strung people. Death or slavery.

When a Pole gave me that proclamation, I was boiling. But I had to restrain myself. I was practically the only foreign civilian in the country and I wanted to get food to the people. That was what I was there for and I must not for any cause jeopardize the undertaking. I asked Governor General von Beseler, "Can this be true?"

"Really, I cannot say," he replied. "I have signed so many proclamations; ask General von Kries."

So I asked General von Kries. "General, this is a civilized people. Can this be true?"

"Yes," he said, "it is true"—with an air of adding, Why not?

I dared not trust myself to speak; I turned to go. "Wait," he said. And he explained to me how Germany, official Germany, regards the state of subject peoples.

Even now I find it hard to describe in comprehensible terms the mind of official Germany, which dominates and shapes all German thought and action. Yet it is as hard, as clear-cut, as real as any material thing. I saw it in Poland, I saw the same thing in Belgium, I hear of it in Serbia and Roumania. For weeks it was always before me, always the same. Officers talked freely, frankly, directly. All the staff officers have the same view.

Let me try to tell it, as General von Kries told me, in Poland, in the midst of a dying nation. Germany is destined to rule the world, or at least a great part of it. The German people are so much human material for building the German State, other people do not count. All is for the glory and might of the German State. The lives of human beings are to be conserved only if it makes for the State's advancement, their lives are to be sacrificed if it is to the State's advantage. The State is all, the people are nothing.

Conquered people signify little in the German account. Life, liberty, happiness, human sentiment, family ties, grace and generous impulse, these have

no place beside the one concern, the greatness of the German State.

Starvation must excite no pity; sympathy must not be allowed, if it hampers the main design of promoting Germany's ends.

"Starvation is here," said General von Kries. "Candidly, we would like to see it relieved; we fear our soldiers may be unfavorably affected by the things that they see. But since it is here, starvation must serve our purpose. So we set it to work for Germany. By starvation we can accomplish in two or three years in East Poland more than we have in West Poland, which is East Prussia, in the last hundred years. With that in view, we propose to turn this force to our advantage."

"This country is meant for Germany," continued the keeper of starving Poland. "It is a rich alluvial country which Germany has needed for some generations. We propose to remove the able-bodied working Poles from this country. It leaves it open for the inflow of German working people as fast as we can spare them. They will occupy it and work it."

Then, with a cunning smile: "Can't you see how it works out? By and by we shall give back freedom to Poland. When that happens Poland will appear automatically as a German province."

In Belgium, General von Bissing told me exactly the same thing. "If the relief of Belgium breaks down we can force the industrial population into Germany through starvation, and colonize other Belgians in Mesopotamia where we have planned large irrigation works. Germans will then overrun Belgium. Then when the war is over and freedom is given back to Belgium, it will be a German Belgium that is restored. Belgium will be a German province and we have Antwerp—which is what we are after."

In Poland, the able-bodied men are being removed to relieve the German workman and make the land vacant for Germany. In Belgium, the men are deported that the country may be a German colony. In Serbia, where three-fourths of a million people out of three millions have perished miserably in the last three years, Germany hardens its heart, shuts its eyes to the suffering, thinks only of Germany's gain. In Armenia, six hundred thousand people were slain in cold blood by

Kurds and Turks under the domination and leadership of German officers—Germany looking on, indifferent to the horror and woe, intent only on seizing the opportunity thus given. War, famine, pestilence—these bring to the German mind no appeal for humane effort, only the resolution to profit from them to the utmost that the German State may be powerful and great.

That is not all. Removing the men, that the land may be vacant for German occupation, that German stock may replace Belgians, Poles, Serbians, Armenians, and now Roumanians, Germany does more. Women left captive are enslaved. Germany makes all manner of lust its instrumentality.

The other day a friend of mine told me of a man just returned from Northern France. "I cannot tell you the details," he said; "man to man, I don't want to repeat what I heard." Some of the things he did tell—shocking mutilation and moral murder. He told of women, by the score, in occupied territory of Northern France, prisoned in underground dungeons, tethered for the use of their bodies by officers and men.

If this is not a piece of the Prussian system, it is the logical product of disregard of the rights of others.

Such is the German mind as it was disclosed to me in several weeks' contact with officers of the staff.

Treaties are scraps of paper, if they hinder German aims.

Treachery is condoned and praised, if it falls in with German interest.

Men, lands, countries are German prizes.

Populations are to be destroyed or enslaved so Germany may gain.

Women are Germany's prey, children are spoils of war.

God gave Germany the Hohenzollern, and together they are destined to rule Europe and, eventually, the world—thus reasons the Kaiser.

Coolly, deliberately, officers of the German staff, permeated by this monstrous philosophy, discuss the denationalization of peoples, the destruction of nations, the undoing of other civilizations, for Germany's account.

In all the world such a thing has never been. The human mind has never conceived the like. Even among barbarians, the thing would be incredible. The mind can scarcely grasp the fact that these things are proposed and done by a modern government professedly a Christian government in the family of civilized nations.

This system has got to be rooted out. If it takes everything in the world, if it takes every one of us, this abomination must be overthrown. It must be ended or the world is not worth living in. No matter how long it takes, no matter how much it costs, we must endure to the end with agonized France, with imperiled Britain, with shattered Belgium, with shaken Russia.

We must hope that Germany will have a new birth as Russia is being reborn. We must pray, as we fight against the evil that is in Germany, that the good which is in Germany may somehow prevail. We must trust that in the end a Germany really great with the strength of a wonderful race may find its place as one of the brotherhood of nations in the new world that is to be.

The responsibility of success or failure rests now upon our shoulders; the eyes of the world are anxiously watching us. Are we going to be able to rise to the emergency, throw off our inefficiency, and prove that Democracy is safe for the world?

Labor and the War

President Wilson's Address to the
American Federation of Labor



Delivered at Buffalo, N. Y., November 12, 1917

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U.S. COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Secretary of State

The Secretary of War

The Secretary of the Navy

George Creel

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Labor and the War

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PRESIDENT WILSON TO
THE CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FED-
ERATION OF LABOR, AT BUFFALO, N. Y.,
NOVEMBER 12, 1917.

*Mr. President, Delegates of the American
Federation of Labor, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

I esteem it a great privilege and a real honor to be thus admitted to your public counsels. When your executive committee paid me the compliment of inviting me here, I gladly accepted the invitation because it seems to me that this, above all other times in our history, is the time for common counsel, for the drawing together not only of the energies but of the minds of the Nation. I thought that it was a welcome opportunity for disclosing to you some of the thoughts that have been gathering in my mind during the last momentous months.

CRITICAL TIME IN HISTORY

I am introduced to you as the President of the United States, and yet I would be pleased if you would put the thought of the

office into the background and regard me as one of your fellow citizens who has come here to speak, not the words of authority, but the words of counsel; the words which men should speak to one another who wish to be frank in **a moment more critical perhaps than the history of the world has ever yet known**; a moment when it is every man's duty to forget himself, to forget his own interest, to fill himself with the nobility of a great national and world conception, and act upon a new platform elevated above the ordinary affairs of life and lifted to where men have views of the long destiny of mankind.

I think that in order to realize just what this moment of counsel is it is very desirable that we should remind ourselves just how this war came about and just what it is for. You can explain most wars very simply, but the explanation of this is not so simple. Its roots run deep into all the obscure soils of history, and in my view this is the last decisive issue between the old principles of power and the new principles of freedom.

WAR STARTED BY GERMANY

The war was started by Germany. Her authorities deny that they started it, but I am willing to let the statement I have just made await the verdict of history. And the

thing that needs to be explained is **why Germany started the war.** Remember what the position of Germany in the world was—as enviable a position as any nation has ever occupied. The whole world stood at admiration of her wonderful intellectual and material achievements. All the intellectual men of the world went to school to her. As a university man I have been surrounded by men trained in Germany, men who had resorted to Germany because nowhere else could they get such thorough and searching training, particularly in the principles of science and the principles that underlie modern material achievement. Her men of science had made her industries perhaps the most competent industries of the world, and the label “Made in Germany” was a guarantee of good workmanship and of sound material. She had access to all the markets of the world, and every other who traded in those markets feared Germany because of her effective and almost irresistible competition. She had a “place in the sun.”

GERMANY'S INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

Why was she not satisfied? What more did she want? There was nothing in the world of peace that she did not already have and have in abundance. We boast of the extraordinary pace of American advance-

ment. We show with pride the statistics of the increase of our industries and of the population of our cities. Well, those statistics did not match the recent statistics of Germany. Her old cities took on youth, grew faster than any American cities ever grew. Her old industries opened their eyes and saw a new world and went out for its conquest. And yet the authorities of Germany were not satisfied. You have one part of the answer to the question why she was not satisfied in her methods of competition. There is no important industry in Germany upon which the Government has not laid its hands, to direct it and, when necessity arose, control it; and you have only to ask any man whom you meet who is familiar with the conditions that prevailed before the war in the matter of national competition to find out the methods of competition which the German manufacturers and exporters used under the patronage and support of the Government of Germany. You will find that they were the same sorts of competition that we have tried to prevent by law within our own borders. If they could not sell their goods cheaper than we could sell ours at a profit to themselves they could get a subsidy from the Government which made it possible to sell them cheaper anyhow, and the conditions of competition were thus

controlled in large measure by the German Government itself.

But that did not satisfy the German Government. All the while there was lying behind its thought in its dreams of the future a political control which would enable it in the long run to dominate the labor and the industry of the world. They were not content with success by superior achievement; they wanted success by authority. I suppose very few of you have thought much about the Berlin-to-Bagdad railway. The Berlin-Bagdad railway was constructed in order to run the threat of force down the flank of the industrial undertakings of half a dozen other countries; so that when German competition came in it would not be resisted too far, because there was always the possibility of getting German armies into the heart of that country quicker than any other armies could be got there.

Look at the map of Europe now! Germany in thrusting upon us again and again the discussion of peace, talks about what? Talks about Belgium; talks about northern France; talks about Alsace-Lorraine. Well, those are deeply interesting subjects to us and to them, but they are not talking about the heart of the matter. Take the map and look at it. Germany has absolute control of Austria-Hungary, practical control of the

Balkan States, control of Turkey, control of Asia Minor. I saw a map in which the whole thing was printed in appropriate black the other day, and the black stretched all the way from Hamburg to Bagdad—the bulk of German power inserted into the heart of the world. If she can keep that, she has kept all that her dreams contemplated when the war began. If she can keep that, her power can disturb the world as long as she keeps it, always provided, for I feel bound to put this proviso in—always provided the present influences that control the German Government continue to control it. I believe that the spirit of freedom can get into the hearts of Germans and find as fine a welcome there as it can find in any other hearts, but the spirit of freedom does not suit the plans of the pan-Germans. Power can not be used with concentrated force against free peoples if it is used by free people.

INSIDIOUS PEACE INTRIGUES

You know how many intimations come to us from one of the Central Powers that it is more anxious for peace than the chief Central Power, and you know that it means that the people in that Central Power know that if the war ends as it stands they will in effect themselves be vassals of Germany,

notwithstanding that their populations are compounded of all the peoples of that part of the world, and notwithstanding the fact that they do not wish in their pride and proper spirit of nationality to be so absorbed and dominated. Germany is determined that the political power of the world shall belong to her. There have been such ambitions before. They have been in part realized, but never before have those ambitions been based upon so exact and precise and scientific a plan of domination.

May I not say that it is amazing to me that any group of persons should be so ill-informed as to suppose, as some groups in Russia apparently suppose, that any reforms planned in the interest of the people can live in the presence of a Germany powerful enough to undermine or overthrow them by intrigue or force? Any body of free men that compounds with the present German Government is compounding for its own destruction. But that is not the whole of the story. Any man in America or anywhere else that supposes that the free industry and enterprise of the world can continue if the pan-German plan is achieved and German power fastened upon the world is as fatuous as the dreamers in Russia. What I am opposed to is not the feeling of the pacifists, but their stupidity. My heart

is with them, but my mind has a contempt for them. I want peace, but I know how to get it, and they do not.

You will notice that I sent a friend of mine, Col. House, to Europe, who is as great a lover of peace as any man in the world, but I didn't send him on a peace mission yet. I sent him to take part in a conference as to how the war was to be won, and he knows, as I know, that that is the way to get peace if you want it for more than a few minutes.

PRODUCTION MUST BE INCREASED

All of this is a preface to the conference that I have referred to with regard to what we are going to do. If we are true friends of freedom of our own or anybody else's, we will see that the power of this country and the productivity of this country is raised to its absolute maximum, and that absolutely nobody is allowed to stand in the way of it. When I say that nobody is allowed to stand in the way I do not mean that they shall be prevented by the power of the Government but by the power of the American spirit. Our duty, if we are to do this great thing and show America to be what we believe her to be—the greatest hope and energy of the world—is to stand together night and day until the job is finished.

LABOR MUST BE FREE

While we are fighting for freedom we must see, among other things, that labor is free, and that means a number of interesting things. It means not only that we must do what we have declared our purpose to do, see that the conditions of labor are not rendered more onerous by the war, but also that we shall see to it that the instrumentalities by which the conditions of labor are improved, are not blocked or checked. That we must do. That has been the matter about which I have taken pleasure in conferring from time to time with your president, Mr. Gompers; and if I may be permitted to do so, I want to express my admiration of his patriotic courage, his large vision, and his statesmanlike sense of what has to be done. I like to lay my mind alongside of a mind that knows how to pull in harness. The horses that kick over the traces will have to be put in corral.

Now, to stand together means that nobody must interrupt the processes of our energy if the interruption can possibly be avoided without the absolute invasion of freedom. To put it concretely, that means this: Nobody has a right to stop the processes of labor until all the methods of conciliation and settlement have been exhausted. And I

might as well say right here that I am not talking to you alone. You sometimes stop the courses of labor, but there are others who do the same; and I believe that I am speaking, not from my own experience only, but from the experience of others, when I say that **you are reasonable in a larger number of cases than the capitalists.** I am not saying these things to them personally yet, because I have not had a chance; but they have to be said, not in any spirit of criticism, but in order to clear the atmosphere and come down to business. Everybody on both sides has now got to transact business, and a settlement is never impossible when both sides want to do the square and right thing.

LABOR DISPUTES MUST BE SETTLED IN CONFERENCES

Moreover, a settlement is always hard to avoid when the parties can be brought face to face. I can differ from a man much more radically when he is not in the room than I can when he is in the room, because then the awkward thing is he can come back at me and answer what I say. It is always dangerous for a man to have the floor entirely to himself. Therefore, **we must insist in every instance that the parties come into each other's presence and there discuss the issues**

between them and not separately in places which have no communication with each other. I always like to remind myself of a delightful saying of an Englishman of the past generation, Charles Lamb. He stuttered a little bit, and once when he was with a group of friends he spoke very harshly of some man who was not present. One of his friends said: "Why, Charles, I didn't know that you knew so and so." "O-o-oh," he said, "I-I d-d-don't; I-I can't h-h-hate a m-m-man I-I know." There is a great deal of human nature, of very pleasant human nature, in the saying. It is hard to hate a man you know. I may admit, parenthetically, that there are some politicians whose methods I do not at all believe in, but they are jolly good fellows, and if they only would not talk the wrong kind of politics, I would love to be with them.

NO SYMPATHY WITH MOB SPIRIT

So it is all along the line, in serious matters and things less serious. We are all of the same clay and spirit, and we can get together if we desire to get together. Therefore, my counsel to you is this: **Let us show ourselves Americans by showing that we do not want to go off in separate camps or groups by ourselves, but that we want to co-operate with all other classes and all other groups in the com-**

mon enterprise which is to release the spirits of the world from bondage. I would be willing to set that up as the final test of an American. That is the meaning of democracy. I have been very much distressed, my fellow citizens, by some of the things that have happened recently. The mob spirit is displaying itself here and there in this country. I have no sympathy with what some men are saying, but I have no sympathy with the men who take their punishment into their own hands; and I want to say to every man who does join such a mob that I do not recognize him as worthy of the free institutions of the United States. There are some organizations in this country whose object is anarchy and the destruction of law, but I would not meet their efforts by making myself partner in destroying the law. I despise and hate their purposes as much as any man, but I respect the ancient processes of justice; and I would be too proud not to see them done justice, however wrong they are.

MUST OBEY COMMON COUNSEL

So I want to utter my earnest protest against any manifestation of the spirit of lawlessness anywhere or in any cause. Why, gentlemen, look what it means. We claim to be the greatest democratic people in the

world, and democracy means first of all that we can govern ourselves. If our men have not self-control, then they are not capable of that great thing which we call democratic government. A man who takes the law into his own hands is not the right man to co-operate in any formation or development of law and institutions, and some of the processes by which the struggle between capital and labor is carried on are processes that come very near to taking the law into your own hands. I do not mean for a moment to compare it with what I have just been speaking of, but I want you to see that they are mere gradations in this manifestation of the unwillingness to co-operate, and that the fundamental lesson of the whole situation is that we must not only take common counsel, but that we must yield to and obey common counsel. Not all of the instrumentalities for this are at hand. I am hopeful that in the very near future new instrumentalities may be organized by which we can see to it that various things that are now going on ought not to go on. There are various processes of the dilution of labor and the unnecessary substitution of labor and the bidding in distant markets and unfairly upsetting the whole competition of labor which ought not to go on. I mean now on the part of employers, and we must interject

into this some instrumentality of co-operation by which the fair thing will be done all around. I am hopeful that some such instrumentalities may be devised, but whether they are or not, we must use those that we have and upon every occasion where it is necessary have such an instrumentality originated upon that occasion.

So, my fellow citizens, the reason I came away from Washington is that I sometimes get lonely down there. There are so many people in Washington who know things that are not so, and there are so few people who know anything about what the people of the United States are thinking about. I have to come away and get reminded of the rest of the country. I have to come away and talk to men who are up against the real thing, and say to them, "I am with you if you are with me." And the only test of being with me is not to think about me personally at all, but merely to think of me as the expression for the time being of the power and dignity and hope of the United States.

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By ELIHU ROOT

Ex-Secretary of State of the United States

THIS is a war of defense. It is perfectly described in the words of the Constitution which established this Nation: "To provide for the common defense," and "To secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

The national defense demands not merely force, but intelligence. It requires foresight, consideration of the policies and purposes of other nations, understanding of the inevitable or probable consequences of the acts of other nations, judgment as to the time when successful defense may be made, and when it will be too late, and prompt action before it is too late.

By entering this war in April, the United States availed itself of the very last opportunity to defend itself against subjection to German power before it was too late to defend itself successfully.

For many years we have pursued our peaceful course of internal development, protected in a variety of ways. We have been protected by the law of nations to which all civilized Governments have professed

* Part of an address delivered at a war mass meeting in Chicago, September 14, 1917.

their allegiance. So long as we committed no injustice ourselves we could not be attacked without a violation of that law. We were protected by a series of treaties under which all the principal nations of the earth agreed to respect our rights and to maintain friendship with us. We were protected by an extensive system of arbitration created by or consequent upon, the peace conferences at The Hague, and under which all controversies arising under the law and under treaties were to be settled peaceably, by arbitration and not by force. We were protected by the broad expanse of ocean separating us from all great military powers, and by the bold assertion of the Monroe Doctrine, that if any of those powers undertook to overpass the ocean and establish itself upon these western continents, that action would be regarded as dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States, and would call upon us to act in our defense. We were protected by the fact that the policy and the fleet of Great Britain were well known to support the Monroe Doctrine. We were protected by the delicate balance of power in Europe, which made it seem not worth while for any power to engage in a conflict here at the risk of suffering from its rivals there.

All these protections were swept away by the war which began in Europe in 1914. The war was begun by the concerted action of Germany and Austria—the invasion of Serbia by Austria on the east, and the invasion of Luxemburg and Belgium by Germany on the west. Both invasions were in

violation of the law of nations, and in violation of the faith of treaties.

Everybody knew that Russia was bound in good faith to come to the relief of Serbia, that France was bound by treaty to come to the aid of Russia, that England was bound by treaty to come to the aid of Belgium, so that the invasion of these two small States was the beginning of a general European war.

These acts, which have drenched the world with blood, were defended and justified in the bold avowal of the German Government that the interests of the German State were superior to the obligations of law and the faith of treaties; that no law or treaty was binding upon Germany which it was for the interest of Germany to violate.

All pretense of obedience to the law of nations and of respect for solemn promises was thrown off; and in lieu of that system of lawful and moral restraint upon power which Christian civilization has been building up for a century, was reinstated the cynical philosophy of Frederick the Great, the greatest of the Hohenzollerns, who declared:

“If possible, the powers of Europe should be made envious against one another, in order to give occasion for a *coup* when the opportunity arises.”

“If a ruler is obliged to sacrifice his own person for the welfare of his subjects, he is all the more obliged to sacrifice treaty engagements, the continuance of which would be harmful to his country. Is it better that a nation should perish or that a sovereign should break his treaty?”

“Statesmanship can be reduced to three principles:—First, to maintain your power, and, according to circumstances, to extend it. Second, to form an alliance only for your own advantage. Third, to command fear and respect, even in the most disastrous times.”

“Do not be ashamed of making interested alliances from which you yourself can derive the whole advantage. Do not make the foolish mistake of not breaking them when you believe your interests require it. . . . Above all, uphold the following maxim:—To despoil your neighbors is to deprive them of the means of injuring you.”

“When he is about to conclude a treaty with some foreign power, if a sovereign remembers he is a Christian he is lost.”

From 1914 until the present, in a war waged with a revolting barbarity unequalled since the conquests of Genghis Kahn, Germany has violated every rule agreed upon by civilized nations in modern times to mitigate the barbarities of war or to protect the rights of non-combatants and neutrals.

She had no grievance against Belgium, except that Belgium stood upon her admitted rights and refused to break the faith of her treaties by consenting that the neutrality of her territory should be violated to give Germany an avenue for the attack upon France.

The German Kaiser has taken possession of the territory of Belgium and subjected her people to the hard yoke of a brutal soldiery.

He has extorted vast sums from her peaceful cities.

He has burned her towns and battered down her noble churches.

He has stripped the Belgium factories of their machinery, and deprived them of the raw materials of manufacture.

He has carried away her workmen by tens of thousands into slavery, and her women into worse than slavery.

He has slain peaceful non-combatants by the hundred, undeterred by the helplessness of age, of infancy, or of womanhood.

He has done the same in Northern France, in Poland, in Serbia, in Roumania.

In all of these countries women have been outraged by the thousands, by tens of thousands; and who ever heard of a German soldier being punished for rape, or robbery, or murder?

These revolting outrages upon humanity and law are not the casual incidents of war; they are the results of a settled policy of frightfulness answering to the maxim of the Great Frederick to "Command respect through fear."

Why were these things done by Germany? The answer rests upon the accumulated evidence of German acts and German words, so conclusive that no pretence can cover it, no sophistry can disguise it. The answer is, that this war was begun and these crimes against humanity were done because Germany was pursuing the hereditary policy of the Hohenzollerns, and following the instincts of the arrogant military caste which rules Prussia, to grasp the overlordship of the civilized world and establish an empire in

which she should play the rôle of ancient Rome.

They were done because Prussian militarism still pursues the policy of power through conquest, of aggrandizement through force and fear, which in little more than two centuries has brought the puny Mark of Brandenburg, with its million and a half of people, to the control of a vast empire—the greatest armed force of the modern world.

It now appears beyond all possibility of doubt that this war was made by Germany in pursuit of a long and settled purpose. For many years she had been preparing to do exactly what she has done, with a thoroughness, a perfection of plans, and a vastness of provision in men, munitions, and supplies, never before equaled or approached in human history.

She brought on the war when she chose, because she chose, in the belief that she could conquer the earth, nation by nation.

All nations are egotistical, all peoples think most highly of their own qualities, and regard other peoples as inferior; but the egotism of the ruling class in Prussia is beyond all example, and it is active and aggressive. They believe that Germany is entitled to rule the world by virtue of her superiority in all those qualities which they include under the term *Kultur*, and by reason of her power to compel submission by the sword.

That belief does not evaporate in theory. It is translated into action, and this war is the action which results. This belief in

national superiority and the right to assert it everywhere is a tradition from the Great Frederick. It has been instilled into the minds of the German people through all the universities and schools. It has been preached from her pulpits and taught by her philosophers and historians. It has been maintained by her Government, and it will never cease to furnish the motive for the people of Prussia, so long as German power enables the military autocracy of Prussia to act upon it with success.

Plainly, if the power of the German Government is to continue, America can no longer look for protection to the law of nations, or the faith of treaties, or the instincts of humanity, or the restraints of modern civilization.

Plainly, also, if we had stayed out of the war, and Germany had won, there would no longer have been a balance of power in Europe, or a British fleet to support the Monroe Doctrine and protect America.

Does any one indulge in the foolish assumption that Germany would not then have extended her lust for power by conquest, to the American continent? Let him consider what it is for which the nations of Europe have been chiefly contending for centuries past. It has been for colonies. It has been to bring the unoccupied or weakly held spaces of the earth under their flags and their political control, in order to increase their trade and their power. Spain, Holland, Portugal, England, France, have all had their turn, and have covered the earth with their possessions. For thirty years Germany, the last comer,

has been pressing forward with feverish activity the acquisition of stations for her power on every coast and every sea, restive and resentful because she has been obliged to take what others have left.

Europe, Asia, and Africa have been taken up. The Americas alone remain. Here in the vast and undefended spaces of the New World, fraught with potential wealth incalculable, Germany could "find her place in the sun," to use her Emperor's phrase; Germany should find her "liberty of national evolution," to use his phrase again. Every traditional policy, every instinct of predatory Prussia, would urge her into this new field of aggrandizement.

What would prevent? The Monroe Doctrine? Yes. But what is the Monroe Doctrine against a nation which respects only force, unless it can be maintained by force? We already know how the German Government feels about the Monroe Doctrine. Bismarck declared it to be a piece of colossal impudence; and when President Roosevelt interfered to assert the doctrine for the protection of Venezuela, the present Kaiser declared that if he then had a larger navy he would have taken America by the scruff of the neck.

If we had stayed out of the war, and Germany had won, we should have had to defend the Monroe Doctrine by force, or abandon it; and if we abandoned it, there would have been a German naval base in the Caribbean commanding the Panama Canal, depriving us of that strategic line which

unites our eastern and western coasts, and depriving us of the protection which the expanse of ocean once gave. And an America unable or unwilling to protect herself against the establishment of a German naval base in the Caribbean would lie at the mercy of Germany, subject to Germany's orders. America's independence would be gone unless she was ready to fight for it, and her security would henceforth be, not a security of freedom, but only a security purchased by submission.

But if America had stayed out of the war and Germany had won, could we have defended the Monroe Doctrine? Could we have maintained our independence? For an answer to this question consider what we have been doing since the second of April last, when war was declared. Congress has been in continuous session, passing with unprecedented rapidity laws containing grants of power and of money unexampled in our history. The executive establishment has been straining every nerve to prepare for war. The ablest and strongest leaders of industrial activity have been called from all parts of the country to aid the Government. The people of the country have generously responded with noble loyalty and enthusiasm to the call for the surrender of money and of customary rights, and the supply of men, to the service of the country. Nearly half a year has passed, and still we are not ready to fight. I am not blaming the Government. It was inevitable. Preparation for modern war cannot be made briefly or speedily. It requires time, long periods of

time; and the more peaceful and unprepared for war a democracy is, the longer is the time required.

It would have required just as long for America to prepare for war if we had stayed out of this war, and Germany had won, and we had undertaken then to defend the Monroe Doctrine, or to defend our coasts when we had lost the protection of the Monroe Doctrine. Month after month would have passed with no adequate army ready to fight, just as these recent months have passed. But what would Germany have been doing to us in the meantime? How long would it have been before our attempts at preparation would have been stopped by German arms? A country that is forced to defend itself against the aggression of a military autocracy, always prepared for war, must itself be prepared for war beforehand, or it never will have the opportunity to prepare.

The history, the character, the avowed principles of action, the manifest and undisguised purposes of the German autocracy, made it clear and certain that if America stayed out of the Great War, and Germany won, America would forthwith be required to defend herself, and would be unable to defend herself, against the same lust for conquest, the same will to dominate the world, which has made Europe a bloody shambles.

When Germany did actually apply her principles of action to us; when by the invasion of Belgium she had violated the solemn covenant she had made with us to observe the law of neutrality established for the pro-

tection of peaceful States; when she had arrogantly demanded that American commerce should surrender its lawful right of passage upon the high seas under penalty of destruction; when she had sunk American ships and sent to their death hundreds of American citizens, peaceful men, women, and children; when the *Gulflight* and the *Falaba* and the *Persia* and the *Arabic* and the *Sussex* and the *Lusitania* had been torpedoed without warning, in contempt of law and of humanity; when the German embassy at Washington had been found to be the headquarters of a vast conspiracy of corruption within our country, inciting sedition and concealing infernal machines in the cargoes of our ships, and blowing up our factories with the workmen laboring in them; and when the Government of Germany had been discovered attempting to incite Mexico and Japan to form a league with her to attack us, and to bring about a dismemberment of our territory; then the question presented to the American people was not what shall be done regarding each of these specific aggressions taken by itself, but what shall be done by America to defend her commerce, her territory, her citizens, her independence, her liberty, her life as a nation, against the continuance of assaults already begun by that mighty and conscienceless power which has swept aside every restraint and every principle of Christian civilization, and is seeking to force upon a subjugated world the dark and cruel rule of a barbarous past. The question was, How shall peaceful and unprepared and liberty-loving America save

herself from subjection to the military power of Germany?

There was but one possible answer. There was but one chance for rescue, and that was to act at once, while the other democracies of the world were still maintaining their liberty against the oppressor; to prepare at once while the armies and the navies of England and France and Italy and Russia and Roumania were holding down Germany so that she could not attack us while our preparation was but half accomplished; to strike while there were Allies loving freedom like ourselves to strike with us; to do our share to prevent the German Kaiser from acquiring that domination over the world which would have left us without friends to aid us, without preparation, and without the possibility of successful defense.

The instinct of the American democracy which led it to act when it did, arose from a long-delayed and reluctant consciousness, still vague and half-expressed, that this is no ordinary war which the world is waging. It is no conquest for petty policies and profits.

It is a mighty and all-embracing struggle between two conflicting principles of human right and human duty.

It is a conflict between the divine right of kings to govern mankind through armies and nobles, and the right of the peoples of the earth who toil and endure and aspire, to govern themselves by law under justice, and in the freedom of individual manhood.

It is the climax of the supreme struggle between autocracy and democracy. No

nation can stand aside and be free from its effects. The two systems cannot endure together in the same world. If autocracy triumphs, military power—lustful of dominion, supreme in strength, intolerant of human rights, holding itself above the reach of law, superior to morals, to faith, to compassion—will crush out the free democracies of the world. If autocracy is defeated and nations are compelled to recognize the rule of law and of morals, then and then only will democracy be safe.

To this great conflict for human rights and human liberty, America has committed herself. There can be no backward step. There must be either humiliating and degrading submission, or terrible defeat, or glorious victory. It was no human will that brought us to this pass. It was not the President. It was not Congress. It was not the press. It was not any political party. It was not any section or part of our people.

It was the fact that, in the providence of God, the mighty forces that determine the destinies of mankind beyond the control of human purpose, have brought to us the time, the occasion, the necessity, that this peaceful people so long enjoying the blessings of liberty and justice for which their fathers fought and sacrificed, shall again gird themselves for conflict, and with all the forces of manhood nurtured and strengthened by liberty, offer again the sacrifice of possessions and of life itself, that this Nation may still be free, that the mission of American democracy shall not have failed, that the world shall be free.

Ways to Serve the Nation



A PROCLAMATION BY THE
PRESIDENT, APRIL 16, 1917

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The Secretary of State
The Secretary of War
The Secretary of the Navy
George Creel

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Ways to Serve the Nation

A PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT, APRIL 16, 1917

MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN:

The entrance of our own beloved country into the grim and terrible war for democracy and human rights which has shaken the world creates so many problems of national life and action which call for immediate consideration and settlement that I hope you will permit me to address to you a few words of earnest counsel and appeal with regard to them.

We are rapidly putting our navy upon an efficient war footing and are about to create and equip a great army, but these are the simplest parts of the great task to which we have addressed ourselves. There is not a single selfish element, so far as I can see, in the cause we are fighting for. We are fighting for what we believe and wish to be the rights of mankind and for the future peace and security of the world. To do this great thing worthily and successfully we must devote ourselves to the service without regard to profit or material advantage, and with an energy and intelligence that will rise to the level of the enterprise itself. We must realize to the full how great the task is, and how many things, how many kinds and elements of capacity and service and self-sacrifice, it involves.

These, then, are the things we must do, and do well, besides fighting—the things without which mere fighting would be fruitless:

We must supply abundant food for ourselves and for our armies and our seamen not only, but also for a large part of the nations with whom we have now made common cause, in whose support and by whose sides we shall be fighting;

We must supply ships by the hundreds out of our shipyards to carry to the other side of the sea, submarines or no submarines, what will every day be needed there; and—

Abundant materials out of our fields and our mines and our factories with which not only to clothe and equip our own forces on land and sea but also to clothe and support our people for whom the gallant fellows under arms can no longer work, to help clothe and equip the armies with which we are co-operating in Europe, and to keep the looms and manufactories there in raw material;

Coal to keep the fires going in ships at sea and in the furnaces of hundreds of factories across the sea;

Steel out of which to make arms and ammunition both here and there;

Rails for worn-out railways back of the fighting fronts;

Locomotives and rolling stock to take the place of those every day going to pieces;

Everything with which the people of England and France and Italy and Russia have usually supplied themselves, but cannot

now afford the men, the materials, or the machinery to make.

It is evident to every thinking man that our industries, on the farms, in the shipyards, in the mines, in the factories, must be made more prolific and more efficient than ever, and that they must be more economically managed and better adapted to the particular requirements of our task than they have been; and what I want to say is that the men and women who devote their thought and their energy to these things will be serving the country and conducting the fight for peace and freedom just as truly and just as effectively as the men on the battlefield or in the trenches. The industrial forces of the country, men and women alike, will be a great national, a great international, Service Army, —a notable and honored host engaged in the service of the nation and the world, the efficient friends and saviors of free men everywhere. Thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, of men otherwise liable to military service will of right and of necessity be excused from that service, and assigned to the fundamental sustaining work of the fields and factories and mines; and they will be as much part of the great patriotic forces of the Nation as the men under fire.

I take the liberty, therefore, of addressing this word to the farmers of the country and to all who work on the farms.

The supreme need of our own nation and of the nations with which we are co-operating is an abundance of supplies, and especially of foodstuffs. The importance of an ade-

quate food supply, especially for the present year, is superlative. Without abundant food, alike for the armies and the peoples now at war, the whole great enterprise upon which we have embarked will break down and fail. The world's food reserves are low. Not only during the present emergency, but for some time after peace shall have come, both our own people and a large proportion of the people of Europe must rely upon the harvests in America. Upon the farmers of this country, therefore, in large measure, rests the fate of the world and the fate of the nations. May the nation not count upon them to omit no step that will increase the production of their land or that will bring about the most effectual co-operation in the sale and distribution of their products? The time is short. It is of the most imperative importance that everything possible be done and done immediately to make sure of large harvests. I call upon young men and old alike and upon the able-bodied boys of the land to accept and act upon this duty—to turn in hosts to the farms and make certain that no pains and no labor is lacking in this great matter.

I particularly appeal to the farmers of the South to plant abundant foodstuffs as well as cotton. They can show their patriotism in no better or more convincing way than by resisting the great temptation of the present price of cotton and helping, helping upon a large scale, to feed the Nation and the peoples everywhere who are fighting for their liberties and for our own. The variety of their crops

will be the visible measure of their comprehension of their national duty.

The Government of the United States and the governments of the several States stand ready to co-operate. They will do everything possible to assist farmers in securing an adequate force of laborers when they are most needed, at harvest time, and the means of expediting shipments of fertilizers and farm machinery, as well as of the crops themselves when harvested. The course of trade shall be as unhampered as it is possible to make it, and there shall be no unwarranted manipulation of the Nation's food supply by those who handle it on its way to the consumer. This is our opportunity to demonstrate the efficiency of a great Democracy, and we shall not fall short of it.

This let me say to the middlemen of every sort, whether they are handling our food stuffs or our raw materials of manufacture or the products of our mills and factories: The eyes of the world will be especially upon you. This is your opportunity for signal service efficient and disinterested. The country expects you, as it expects all others, to forego unusual profits, to organize and expedite shipments of supplies of every kind, but especially of food, with an eye to the service you are rendering and in the spirit of those who enlist in the ranks, for their people, not for themselves. I shall confidently expect you to deserve and win the confidence of people of every sort and station.

To the men who run the railways of the country, whether they be managers or opera-

tive employees, let me say that the railways are the arteries of the nation's life, and that upon them rests the immense responsibility of seeing to it that those arteries suffer no obstruction of any kind, no inefficiency or slackened power.

To the merchant let me suggest the motto, "Small profits and quick service"; and to the shipbuilder the thought that the life of the war depends upon him. The food and the war supplies must be carried across the seas no matter how many ships are sent to the bottom. The places of those that go down must be supplied and supplied at once.

To the miner let me say that he stands where the farmer does; the work of the world waits on him. If he slackens or fails, armies and statesmen are helpless. He also is enlisted in the great Service Army.

The manufacturer does not need to be told, I hope, that the nation looks to him to speed and perfect every process; and I want only to remind his employees that their service is absolutely indispensable and is counted on by every man who loves his country and its liberties.

Let me suggest, also, that everyone who creates or cultivates a garden helps, and helps greatly, to solve the problem of the feeding of the nations; and that every housewife who practices strict economy puts herself in the ranks of those who serve the Nation. This is the time for America to correct her unpardonable fault of wastefulness and extravagance. Let every man and every woman assume the duty of careful

provident use and expenditure as a public duty, as a dictate of patriotism which no one can now expect ever to be excused or forgiven for ignoring.

In the hope that this statement of the needs of the Nation and of the world in this hour of supreme crisis may stimulate those to whom it comes and remind all who need reminder of the solemn duties of a time such as the world has never seen before, I beg that all editors and publishers everywhere will give as prominent publication and as wide circulation as possible to this appeal. I venture to suggest, also, to all advertising agencies that they would perhaps render a very substantial and timely service to the country if they would give it widespread repetition. And I hope that clergymen will not think the theme of it an unworthy or inappropriate subject of comment and homily from their pulpits.

The supreme test of the Nation has come. We must all speak, act, and serve together!

WOODROW WILSON.

What Really Matters



*A letter by an unnamed writer, quoted
by Rev. Joseph H. Odell in an article in
the Atlantic Monthly for February, 1918*

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What Really Matters

THE world is getting down to brass tacks. (I wonder who invented that phrase and what its original significance was.) We are cutting out all sorts of non-essentials. Daniel Willard of the War Board has emphasized the need of eliminating non-essentials if we are to win the war, but he meant physical non-essentials. We must cut out mental and spiritual non-essentials too; and we are beginning to do it to a surprising and encouraging degree. As a matter of fact, the trend was in that direction before the war; the tendency has long been toward a world-wide standardization, a universal merging or pooling in the interests of efficiency.

The one question now is autocracy versus democracy. Nothing else matters for the moment.

Therefore our prejudices must go; we must give up old preferences; we cannot think provincially any longer. The doctrines we laboriously taught must be foregone. What difference does it make what the political economies say? What difference does it make what the party platforms of the

last generation have declared? Every hidden hypocrisy is now revealed; every contention that was based on selfishness stands exposed; every programme of personal or factional or neighborhood greed that we clothed in a disguise of wholesomeness, which almost deceived even ourselves, disappears.

Autocracy or democracy—there is our stark alternative.

We cared for certain foods and did not care for others. No matter; we shall eat what is set before us.

We had our preferences in raiment. We shall take what we can get.

“The best government is that which governs least.” But now the best government is the government which lends the most effective aid to the grand alliance against Germany.

We argued the relative merits and ethics of direct and indirect taxation. Now the only question is how to raise the money we need most easily and promptly.

Old obstacles break down everywhere. Nothing is sacred now—except Our Cause. Nothing can be sure of its standing in our hearts and souls except the future of human liberty. We may go back to our prejudices by and by; there is perhaps no reason why we should not when there is time for such non-essentials.

The Government has always heretofore maintained an attitude of aloofness from its thrifty citizens; it offered them nothing in the way of investments. Now its attitude toward them is one urgent welcome; a child with twenty-five cents is free to become a creditor of the august Federal régime.

Never was the Government so close to its people; never, perhaps, in another sense, so far from them. But, either way, old conceptions of government are broken down.

The trend is all in the direction of a weakening of tradition and form. What is the Constitution in this greatest of all crises? If it serves, we shall revere it as it is; if it does not serve, we shall amend it to suit the new duty of the new occasion.

Nothing matters but the winning of the war.

We must forego our old social prejudices. We have very largely foregone them. We may like our little circle about the hearth as much as ever, and we are entitled to it; but we must not let it interfere for a moment with our larger social, national, or international obligations.

The day of the Pilgrim Fathers is over. Like it or not, we have got to face it. New England is what we would have called till lately an alien corner of the country. It is a New Europe rather than a New England

now. If we pine for an untainted Anglo-Saxon survival, we shall have to seek it among the unspoiled mountaineers of North Carolina and Tennessee. . . .

Republican? Democrat? Prohibitionist or Socialist? Mere unmeaning names just now. Even American is too small for the world-emergency except as it is a synonym for liberty and democracy.

There are 168 religious denominations in the United States. . . . There is one religious need, one religious aspiration; it is the desire to simplify and intensify man's relations with the Eternal Power.

Wake up America! Slough off the non-essentials. Get down to brass tacks. Live simply, think sincerely, give all you have of mind and strength to the one task before which every other task pales.

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